

Washington, DC -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement regarding early recovery efforts from Hurricane Irene. In the aftermath of the storm, Hinchey has been working to ensure that localities are prepared to receive needed federal assistance.

"The circumstances we face in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene are tragic. My heart goes out to those who have felt the worst effects of this storm. Thousands saw damage to their homes, many were severely injured, and some lost friends and loved ones. While the storm has passed, many of our communities remain flooded and without power.

"Yet, as we always do, New Yorkers from across our region have pulled together in support of each other. I want to thank the first responders who rescued those in harm's way and the neighbors who lent a helping hand to friends in need. Their efforts have helped to lessen the destructive force of this storm.

"Moving forward, it is critical that local, county, state and federal officials coordinate their efforts so we can recover from Hurricane Irene as quickly as possible. My offices are open for business, and we're working directly with FEMA and other federal agencies to ensure that New York receives the resources it desperately needs. I am also working with the counties and localities in New York's 22nd Congressional District to ensure that their needs are being met.

"It's clear that a major disaster has occurred and federal funds should be provided to help New Yorkers recover. Congressional action will also be necessary to increase funding for the President's Disaster Relief fund. The fund now contains less than \$1 billion, and the effects of Hurricane Irene felt throughout the eastern seaboard are likely to run this account far into the red. I am hopeful that the funding necessary to support recovery efforts will be made available without the typical Washington, DC games of partisanship. This is an emergency, and we can't afford to waste any time in getting New Yorkers, and all Americans affected by Hurricane Irene, back on their feet."